

FORMER CIA DIRECTOR WOOLSEY HOLDS NEWS BRIEFING ON WEAPONS OF MASS  
DESTRUCTION FOR THE BIPARTISAN TASK FORCE ON NONPROLIFERATION

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**SPEAKER: JAMES WOOLSEY**  
FORMER CIA DIRECTOR

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**U.S. REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTOPHER SHAYS (R-CT)**  
**U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH HOFFEL (D-PA)**  
**U.S. REPRESENTATIVE RUSS HOLT (D-NJ)**

**MARKEY:** Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for coming to this week's edition of the nonproliferation task force. We try each week or two to have a session which helps members of Congress and staff understand the various aspects of the threats which weapons of mass destruction offer to our planet.

Today we have a particularly distinguished American who will address us on an issue which, I think, each American has now developed an intense interest. I'd like to thank him for coming to address the task force, because it turns on this most recent question of whether or not Osama bin Laden and his associates have, in fact, gained access to nuclear weapons.

There has been a report in The Washington Post that he claims that he has obtained access to nuclear weapons, but even if he lacks the technology to put a warhead in a missile and launch it remotely, the weapon, if what he was saying is true, could still be smuggled into a country and detonated in a highly populated area with catastrophic consequences.

Second, does bin Laden have nuclear materials that could be used in a conventional explosive to make a dirty bomb? An associate of bin Laden's has testified that he was personally involved in an attempt to obtain uranium for bin Laden. While the consequences of a dirty bomb are somewhat less than for a nuclear explosion, still such a weapon would cause a significant loss of life and long-lasting environmental contamination.

And third, something which has become quite clear since September 11, because we have gathered evidence from a number of Al Qaeda sources, if, in fact, they could obtain the capacity to attack successfully a nuclear power plant in the United States, they have made quite clear that it would be near the top of their list of targets, which would, obviously, result in a catastrophic event.

So what can the United States and its allies do to minimize this threat from Al Qaeda and bin Laden or some other sub-national group?

Here to educate us today is our speaker, James Woolsey. He is currently a partner at the law firm of Shay and Gardner in Washington, D.C., and a trustee for the Center for Strategic and International Studies and chairman of the Advisory Committee on the Clean Fuels Foundation.

Jim served as director of the Central Intelligence Agency for two years during the Clinton Administration. He has also served on the National Commission on Terrorism, the Commission on Access to Ballistic Missile Threats to the United States, the Rumsfeld commission (ph), the president's blue ribbon commission on defense management, the Packard (ph) commission, and the president's commission on strategic forces, the Scowcroft commission. There are only a small handful of Americans who have the knowledge, the insight in these issues, which our special guest today has. Please welcome Jim Woolsey to the Nonproliferation...

(APPLAUSE)

WOOLSEY: Thank you, Congressman.

I want to say that I was honored when Congressman Markey and Congressman Shays asked me to be with you today, but to tell you the truth, since I'm a Washington lawyer who has spent some time out at the CIA, I'm pretty well honored to be invited into any polite company for any purposes whatsoever.

Knowing that this event was coming up, my friend Mansoor Ijaz, who is far better trained in physics than I, and I managed to get an op-ed published in the New York Times this morning on precisely this subject, and it's available outside.

WOOLSEY: I will not go through all the details of it, but let me say a word about two points and then leave maximum time for questions. One is the nuclear threat from proliferation in connection with terrorism.

The most likely source and the one that has given rise to the most concern that Al Qaeda might have access to fissionable material and nuclear weapons, for that matter radiological material of any kind that could be used in a dirty weapon, comes because of the close relationship previously between the Pakistani government and the Taliban, the sponsor and host for Al Qaeda, and particularly the Pashtun tribes in the northwest frontier of Pakistan and southern Afghanistan, and the close trade and relationship between them. Also the fact that the Pakistani government at one point, not long ago, arrested and interrogated two scientists, one in particular of which had had some visits to Afghanistan, some discussions with senior Al Qaeda people and was known to be quite sympathetic, physicists in their nuclear program.

Because Pakistan has taken some very useful steps over the course of the last few months in dispersing its fissionable material and its cores for its nuclear warheads and its detonators to secret locations, because it has replaced some key individuals in its military and intelligence programs, and because President Musharraf has acted, although perhaps not in each and every detail the way the United States government might have wanted since September 11, by and large has on all extremely important matters, has been an extraordinary asset to the fight against terrorism, and because he takes this issue very seriously, I think I would say that the likelihood that fissionable material has been made available directly or indirectly by Pakistan to Al Qaeda is of the smallest of probabilities.

WOOLSEY: But there are other problems. There have been, as we mentioned in the article, since the end of the Cold War over 170 incidents -- most of these are scams using non-fissionable radiological material -- but over 175 incidents in which individuals in the former Soviet Union have either tried to smuggled some type of nuclear material outside the country or there have been plots to do so. The last one was just a few weeks ago, at the beginning of November.

And Because fissionable material was so extensive in the Soviet Union, and including across a number of republics -- happily, it's been now reconcentrated into Russia as a result of U.S. government action -- and because a small amount of it could be extraordinarily valuable and because of the breakdown in law and order for much of the '90s in many aspects of Russian society and the growth of organized crime, there has to be said to be some possibility that a few kilograms of plutonium or highly enriched uranium, in one way or another, through organized crime circles into terrorist circles, have made their way into Al Qaeda's hands.

It's not proven. There is not direct evidence of it that I know of anyway, but it is not impossible. And Russia, as I said, has had a 175 incidents of one kind or another over the course of the last decade.

WOOLSEY: To use only one example, during my tenure as director of central intelligence in 1994, the Russian Interior Ministry arrested a janitor from a Russian facility -- I forget whether it was a test reactor or a power plant -- who had a couple of kilograms of plutonium.

Now, during the Cold War, we needed to keep track of Soviet progress on weapons of mass destruction that might damage us. Well, we could do that with reconnaissance satellites taking pictures of new construction of ICBM silos in Siberia. We didn't have to try to keep track of Russian janitors.

So this is an entirely new world, and it's one in which filtering of material from Russia would have to be said, I believe, both fissionable material that could be used in bombs and other radiological material which might be used in a dirty conventional bomb spreading contamination around the area in which the bomb exploded, that leakage from Russia would have to be my first and foremost concern.

Happily, there is already a program in place, Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction, to do this. There has been a debate in the Congress about how much it should be funded, and in the executive branch. I am a strong supporter of Nunn-Lugar and would urge rapid implementation of it as quickly as humanly possible. Only about 40 percent of the program has been completed. At the current rate, it'll take another quarter of a century to finish it.

Part of the delay is the fault of various institutions in Russia in going along with steps that need to be taken. And sometimes, people asking for bribes in order to comply with steps that they need to take and the like. Some of it is funding in the United States.

But without blaming anybody, what really needs to happen is that the congressional leaders and the leaders in the executive branch need to get together, fully fund the program, make it ready to go.

WOOLSEY: There are some substantial unobligated balances for it now, I'm told. But the money needs to get spent in Russia. And the Russian government and the Russian institutions that are cooperating in this need to get off the dime themselves.

I would put that at the very top of the anti-proliferation agenda, including potential proliferation to terrorist groups, because of the possible link through organized crime.

Pakistan presents a separate and important problem. And what Mansoor and I say in the op-ed that was published in the Times this morning, is that we really ought to move now under the current circumstances, both for India and Pakistan, to waive whatever limitations there are in American export license controls and also where necessary any limitations that are created by the Indian and Pakistani lack of membership and compliance with the nonproliferation treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Their lack of participation in that has limited -- as well as American sanctions, have limited not just our ability to export weapons to them, but any weapons-related technology, and that includes things which it is very much in our interest especially now to export.

And so we ought to move now to do whatever is necessary to get waivers for such things as vaults (ph), sensors, alarms, tamper-proof seals, close circuit cameras, labels and all of the accoutrements that go with being able to secure fissionable material. And as much as Pakistan, and for that matter India, are willing to ask them to work with us in securing other radiological materials, such as some that's available in hospitals and the like, that could be used in dirty conventional bombs, even if it is not fissionable and could not be used for nuclear explosion.

WOOLSEY: Now, the other point I want to make is that this issue of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in the context of the post-September 11 world, whether we are talking about biological materials or nuclear, I think is intimately involved with the question of whether we are, in fact, at war only with Al Qaeda and their immediate hosts, the Taliban, or whether we are -- and Al Qaeda, and all of its

manifestations in different parts of the world -- or whether there is the possibility that a state -- and certainly Iraq is the first one that comes to mind -- is also involved in one or another in terrorist attacks against us; not necessarily as a manager, as a director, but as a joint-venturer perhaps in some specific regards, such as supplying false identities to people, such as scouting out the way and informing Al Qaeda of the way the FBI and CIA work on matters, providing technology, if not the material itself, for the anthrax.

We don't know at this point, precisely what may or may not have been done by a government. The reason I put Iraq front and center rather than Iran, which also sponsors terrorism, is that after bin Laden moved from Sudan to Afghanistan and threw in with -- and indeed in a sense, Afghanistan by the late '90s became a terrorist-sponsored state, as distinct from a state sponsoring terrorism, because a few million dollars goes a long way in a country such as Afghanistan.

But once Al Qaeda became a major factor -- let's put it this way -- in Afghanistan and supported solidly the Pashtun in their total conquest of the country, including such incidents as the murder of a number of Iranian so-called diplomats, really intelligence officers in Herat, and including some brutal persecution of Farsi and Persian language minorities, the Tajiks and the Hazari, I believe that the likelihood of close cooperation between Tehran and Al Qaeda went away.

WOOLSEY: There may well have been some back in the '90s. Yosef Bodonski's (ph) -- in the mid-'90s -- Yosef Bodonski's (ph) book on the Taliban is a good thing to consult if you're interested in that subject.

But today, I think the likely foreign government, by head and shoulders, to be involved with Al Qaeda is Iraq. And the reason this issue is directly related to weapons of mass destruction is that we know, of course, that Saddam has worked hard and is working on a wide range of biological toxic materials, weapons of all sorts, and hard on a nuclear program. Kadir Hamza, if you have not heard from him, Saddam's bomb maker, a fascinating and articulate individual, would be someone that would be very worth listening to on the question of Saddam's work on nuclear programs.

Because both nuclear and biological weapons, materials, know-how, technology, is so available in Baghdad, and because of Saddam's extraordinary hatred for us as a result of the aftermath of the Gulf War, I think we ought to pay very close attention to this potential link in seeking to understand how to protect ourselves from proliferation to terrorists involving weapons of mass destruction.

The proposition that is normally put, particularly by our European friends, on this point is, "Look, why would Saddam do something like this. He has outlasted the sanctions. He has outlasted the U.N. inspections. He is about to get out from under the sanctions -- or at least it looked like he might as of a few months ago. Why would he risk all that?"

WOOLSEY: Now, my answer to that is very straightforward. I believe he holds us in contempt. I believe he has an attitude toward us quite similar to that which the Japanese had in early December of 1941, namely that this self-indulgent and non-serious nation would not fight.

As my friend, Admiral Tom Moorer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs, once told a group in Japan, we would not fortify Wake and Guam, our Army was drilling with wooden rifles in Louisiana. You didn't think we'd fight. We surprised you.

I think Saddam and Al Qaeda and the Taliban and a number of other parts of the world have been surprised by the speed and decisiveness of the American reaction to September 11. But you can see how they would have gotten into a mentality thinking that they could get away with something.

If you look back to the early '80s, the Marines are attacked and a number killed in Beirut and we leave. You look to 1991, we decisively organized the Gulf War coalition, win the war and then halt just short of destroying the Republican Guard, sign a truce which permits Saddam to fly helicopters around with troops

in them, encourage the Kurds in the north and the Shi'a to revolt against him, see them take control, for all practical purposes, of 14 out of Iraq's 18 provinces and then stand aside while they are massacred.

Then comes 1993. Saddam tries to kill former President Bush in a visit to Kuwait. The CIA sends a group over of forensic experts, examines the unexploded bomb, says "Yes, this is Mukhabarat, this is Iraqi intelligence," tells President Clinton; he wants to be absolutely sure; he sends the FBI over, a larger forensic team, they go through the same thing. They come back and say, "Yes, Mukhabarat, Iraqi intelligence" -- and all of us know there's no rogue elephant in Iraq, if Iraqi intelligence did it, it was ordered by Saddam -- and we fire a few cruise missiles into an empty building in the middle of the night by way of retaliation.

WOOLSEY: I'm not quite sure what this decisiveness vis-à-vis Iraqi cleaning women and night watchmen was supposed to accomplish, but I doubt very seriously if it had deterrent effect on Saddam at all.

There was a reasonable chance, I won't say this is certain, that he was almost at the same time involved in some aspects of the World Trade Center bombing of 1993. I'll refer you to Laurie Mylroie's book, "Study of Revenge," for chapter and verse and the details on that. And then, at the same year, 1993, possibly as a result of Al Qaeda action, we have nearly 20 rangers killed when the Black Hawks are shot down, and again, as in Beirut in the early 1980s, we take casualties and we leave.

If you move through the '90s and see the terrorist events against us, in Khobar Towers, in the embassies, in the Cole, see us work very hard with law enforcement to try to find out who it is, but never effectively make any accusations against, as a nation, or take action against any possible state sponsor, and I must say, not look very hard for state sponsorship.

If you were Saddam Hussein and you have seen that litany since the early 1980s and you regard it that by your own skill and bravery you escaped the Americans' clutches in the spring of 1991, why would you not hold us in contempt? Why would you think that even if you were caught supporting Al Qaeda we would do anything?

If you have the mentality of Saddam -- and after all, he's been a killer all his life, he was a hit man before he was a dictator -- if you have that attitude, it's very understandable to me why you might feel free to provide this type of support here and that type of support there to an organization like Al Qaeda and figure that, A, you're not likely to be caught; and, B, if you are caught, probably not that much is going to happen to you.

WOOLSEY: So I think up until the very decisive response that was launched early in October, we have been held in contempt in much of the Mideast, in the Arab and Muslim world.

And we saw it in the Arab street in the reaction to September 11. We saw it in the happy reactions of even some Mideastern visitors to this country. There was a famous incident out at San Diego State and so forth. We have seen it in the happy dancing in the streets of the West Bank as a number of Palestinians cheered September 11. We saw the angry demonstrations. It turned out they were a few hundred to a few thousand, not tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands. But there were demonstrations in Pakistan and elsewhere, all of which are covered again and again and again by Al Jazeera.

But after Mazar-i-Sharif fell and one by one the major cities of Afghanistan, and the Taliban filtered out talking about the devastating effects of the American bombing, and on Western media, but not on Al Jazeera, you saw the happy faces, women smiling without the burqas covering them from head to toe for the first time in years, the children flying kites, the men having their beards cut, and the fact apparent to any objective observer that Afghanistan was freed of a terrible scourge, once that began to happen, the demonstrations in the Arab street started going down and down and down. You haven't heard about any for several days. Believe me, if there had been any, you would have seen it. The reason you haven't seen them on television is they're not occurring.

WOOLSEY: The reason they're not occurring is that there are a lot of people that are now saying, "Was that the United States that did that? We haven't seen them act like that in our lifetime, ever."

Now, this is the United States that the world has not really seen in some ways since August of 1945. But I firmly believe that out there there are something approaching 300 million people filled with cold fury. And I think that we have finally, perhaps, gotten the attention of the Saddams of the world and those who would sympathize with Al Qaeda in the Mideast. But in my judgment, we have just gotten started.

And I think that it is important to seriously consider, now that we have shown ourselves to be effective, although certainly the job is not finished, in moving against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, it is time to at least start thinking and planning -- not making any military moves yet, but thinking and planning -- as to whether the next phase of this needs to be one which moves against a state sponsor -- another state sponsor of terrorist acts against us.

We know that Saddam tried to kill former President Bush in the spring of '93. We know there have been senior and multitudinous contacts between Iraqi intelligence and terrorist organizations throughout the '90s. There is a strong possibility Iraq was involved in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. We know that the lead bomber on September 11, Mohamed Atta, met with Iraqi intelligence in Prague, disclosed by the Czech government.

WOOLSEY: We know that there have been extensive cases of training at Salman Pak (ph) just south of Baghdad on an old Boeing 707, which you can now see on the web from space imager's commercial satellite photography. On that 707 training -- five eyewitnesses, two Americans, three Iraqi defectors, training of Iraqi and separately, non-Iraqi, hijackers in how to hijack an aircraft with knives.

And we also know that there were three substantial anthrax programs in the world that militarized anthrax effectively: ours, which was destroyed effectively in 1969, although some experimental material remained in some laboratories; the old Soviet Biopreparat program, and it's not impossible that the technology or the anthrax came from some dissident Soviet scientist -- former Soviet scientist in the same way that I described through organized crime, et cetera, a trail of nuclear materials; but we also know that Iraq had an extensive biological weapons and anthrax program. It had militarized anthrax in extremely sophisticated ways.

The one thing -- I'll close with this -- the one thing that I think is most unlikely is that, wholly independent of anything that happened on September 11, there was ready in early September -- let's say in a cave somewhere under Trenton, New Jersey, a wholly independent fanatic -- let's say American Nazi Ph.D. microbiologist -- with a well-equipped laboratory that could culture anthrax and indeed dry it and process it to exactly the right size of spores and exactly the right degree of electrostatic charge so that it would not stick together. And it was just a coincidence that he was there and ready. And then after September 11, one week later, he started sending out anthrax-laden letters.

WOOLSEY: And 28 days later, he started sending out -- from the postmarks -- industrially or cleverly and craftily militarized anthrax with 100,000 lethal doses in one envelope.

Now if that's too much of a coincidence for you, and it is for me, the only other possibility if the anthrax is unconnected to September 11, and those who did September 11, is that this solitary American Nazi Ph.D. microbiologist didn't think of doing anything about this until September 11, saw September 11 and said, "Wow, let's go," and got all of this done within seven days and within 28 days. It's even less likely.

The strong probability is that in some fashion -- perhaps the distributor is an American. Perhaps he's an immigrant alien from the Mideast who had some ties to terrorists years ago. Who knows?

But the fact that there might be a single distributor of this does not mean that the undertaking as a whole was completely independent of an anthrax program abroad, such as, quite plausibly, Iraq's.

So there are a number of unanswered questions on this issue of state involvement, and particularly Iraqi involvement, in terrorist acts against the United States September 11 and after.

There's no question that Saddam is making weapons of mass destruction in violation of his obligations, and there's no question that he tried for assassination former President Bush in the spring of 1993.

For the issue of proliferation, however, which is on the agenda of this particular task force, I think you'd have to say the jury is still out, but there is at least some very interesting, and I would say rather substantially incriminating, circumstantial evidence.

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

SHAYS: Again, I want to thank you for being here. What we do in these meetings is we have the members who are here ask questions of our speaker. We go to staff and then we go to the press. We're going to be our speaker out of here -- we're going to get Jim out of here by 5 o'clock.

So I'll get right to it. I just want to recognize Russ Holt and Jim Hoeffel -- Joe Hoeffel, I'm sorry -- Pennsylvania and New Jersey, who will have some questions as well.

I would just ask you this question, Jim. I'd like to know whether you believe that we need to deal with Iraq next, deal with Yemen, Sudan, possibly the so-called more easier efforts first. I'd like to know if use their refusal to do inspections as our excuse, if they allow for inspections, would we then just do it that way and not have to do more in Iraq?

WOOLSEY: All right. First of all, I don't think -- let's jump forward a few weeks, maybe a month or two or more, to the point at which Afghanistan has been fully taken over by a new government.

WOOLSEY: We don't know whether Al Qaeda will be totally wiped out and we'll know who is dead and who isn't, or whether people are in caverns underneath the ground, or people are imprisoned. But let's look forward let's say into the new year some weeks.

It seems to me that it's important to have had one decisive success under our belt before we move on substantially into other areas, particularly areas where combat might be involved. It's very important, because of the history I described from Beirut on, that we not have failures here. We need an aura of success around us and that means we need to be careful about what we do.

There are a number of governments -- now even including Yemen, apparently, but certainly including the Philippines and other countries -- where there are Al Qaeda and Islamist extremist terrorist operations where the government is either friendly, or for a long time, like the Philippines, or newly friendly, like Yemen, and is willing to start taking action. In those areas, our support could well be information, intelligence, technology, training. It doesn't need to be, and would not be in a country like that, B-52s and special forces on the ground and Marines.

So I think that it's perfectly reasonable to move forward where we can -- Philippines is a perfect example -- with governments that want to work with us. And we may have increasing numbers of governments want to work with us as what has happened in Afghanistan sinks in.

So it seems to me the question really is, do we move, at some point, militarily, perhaps relatively early in the New Year, against Iraq? My judgment is that this is the heart of the matter. This is going for the jugular, really, of the regimes in the Mideast that are wholly and thoroughly hostile to us and are as clear and immediate danger to us and their neighbors.

The reason I don't put Iran completely in that category, in spite of the fact that the mullahs hate us and operate terrorist operations, quite possibly Khobar Towers, against us, and certainly Hezbollah against Israel, is that Iran is a country in ferment. Iran, of course, has murderous mullahs running its instruments of state power, such as its intelligence service, but it also has an informed electorate that votes 75 percent regularly in elections for reform candidates, it has brave newspaper editors, it even has brave ayatollahs in the holy city of Qom who criticize the wilayat al-faqi, the rule of the jurisprudent, the mullahs who run the instruments of state power in the country.

WOOLSEY: And also you've read, perhaps sketchily; it hasn't been reported that much in the American press, but it's happening -- you have demonstrations taking place of tens of thousands of people in Iran over the course of the last month, often centered around soccer games, and these are young people -- but half of Iran is under 21 -- who are fed up with being ruled by the mullahs, and the portraits they're burning are those of Khamenei and Khomeini. And the things they are cheering are, believe it or not, "USA."

So a lot of ferment is taking place in Iran, and I think we want to not do anything to disturb that excellent ferment. I certainly would not be cordial or friendly with the Iranian regime, but if they want to swap some intelligence or something about Iraq, I think that would be all right. There are a few limited things one might do. But we don't want to embrace them, because the reason the students are cheering us is because the mullahs hate us so much. We don't want to interfere with that dynamic at all.

Now Iraq is hopeless. That is, the Ba'athist regime in Iraq is hopeless. It is not like Iran at all. It is not in ferment. Saddam has run the country by torture for 30 years, and he and, if he dies, his sons, both of whom like to kill people for fun, will run the country by torture for a long time.

He is weak among the Iraqi people. He's weak especially in the north and south, among the Kurds and the Shi'a. His army is a fraction of its power in 1991, and in 1991, after an extensive campaign of aerial bombardment, the war lasted 100 hours -- the land war.

We had Iraqi Republican Guards surrendering to unmanned aerial vehicles after the air bombardment. We had, in 1991, only 10 percent of our ordnance delivered was smart weapons, but that was extraordinarily effective against Iraqi armor and the like.

In Afghanistan today, 65 to 70 percent of the ordnance that is being delivered is smart weapons.

WOOLSEY: One of the reasons the air power -- and Fareed Zakaria this morning in the Post -- the op-ed was superb on this point. One of the reasons the air power was so effective without hundreds of sorties was because, for all practical purposes, every bomb counted. Occasionally, one of those things goes astray, tragically. But the accuracy, comparatively speaking, even as an improvement over the Gulf War was -- has been extraordinary in Afghanistan.

So I think we have some tools that we can use against Iraq. With air power, with support for the Iraqi opposition, with support for the Shi'a in the south and the Kurds in the north, and the INC, which Congress has been urging for some time.

SHAYS: So let me ask this just so I'm -- I let my other members get a chance: Would you like them to refuse our coming in to do inspections to give us the excuse to use this power? And then I'd like Ed to be able to jump in and Rush and Jeff and Joe.



WOOLSEY: I think they will refuse. At least they will refuse substantive compliance. They might be scared enough they would accept pro forma and then play the same games that they played with the inspectors three and four and five years ago. And I don't think we should negotiate with them about that. I think the president has made his statement: "Accept the inspectors" -- and the implication of that is accept real inspectors -- "or else."

And I don't think there's much talking to do. I think if they don't do that, we are perfectly free, given what they have done in the '90s and given their violation of their obligations with respect to weapons of mass destruction, to move against them.

Personally, I would not require a tie to be demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt to September 11 or the anthrax. But I fully understand why that's a very important debate. I'll try to be briefer.

MARKEY: Oh, no. Actually, I think you have everyone here spellbound by your detailed...

SHAYS: We realize that you used to brief presidents, so we consider this an honor.

WOOLSEY: Well, I had two meetings with President Clinton in the two years that I was there, so I didn't brief presidents very much.

(LAUGHTER)

MARKEY: So there's a lot of good material saved up and we appreciate it.

You know, the history of this really goes back to 1981, when Menachem Begin sent 16 F-16s and 18s across the northern Saharan Desert into Baghdad -- or actually 70 miles outside of Baghdad to destroy the Osirak nuclear reactor, which was, in fact, the cover for the nuclear weapons program. It was a Canadian reactor.

MARKEY: It was French fuel that was being used. And the day after it was destroyed, the United States actually joined with the rest of the U.N. in condemning Israel, when, in retrospect, we realized that Menachem Begin deserve the Nobel Peace Prize for what he did.

So it bought us time. So now we reach 2001 and, obviously, they don't hold the Israelis in contempt; they fear the Israelis.

The question though, I think, on many people's minds is this. We haven't finished the job in Afghanistan yet. It's a highly confusing military situation that exists in many parts of that country. We have built a coalition which has every country in the world pretty much on our side -- many countries that we would not have expected, but everyone lining up with us.

A lot of people say that if want to go back in against Saddam again, since it took 500,000 troops in 1991, and the cooperation of all of those other Arab nations at the time, because they had a grievance at the time, that it would be very difficult to reconstruct that coalition, that the Saudis might not allow us to use their country as a staging area, that the Kuwaitis might not let us use their country as a staging area, that no other country might let us use it. And then at the end of the day we might wind up with just the Brits and ourselves...

SHAYS: I made a mistake. I told Ed this is the only question he could ask.

MARKEY: ... isolated without any real allies in the rest of the world, and that we would be in a go-it-alone situation. And some people say, just to frame it quite poignantly, that that would lead to the eruption of the Muslim masses, and it could perhaps even destabilize Pakistan, which should be our greatest concern in terms of the control of their nuclear weapons.

Could you deal with that in terms of how you would conduct this strike against Iraq?

WOOLSEY: Yes, let me try it.

First, let me say, of course I went to a lot of NSC meetings in the two years I was director of the Central Intelligence, but I had two semi-private meetings with the president two years and it got to be well known enough that when that little airplane crashed on the South Lawn of the White House in the fall of '94, the White House staff joke was, "That must be Woolsey still trying to get an appointment."

(LAUGHTER)

WOOLSEY: Now, I think that the -- first of all, the psychology of the street, the Arab street, and the authoritarian governments -- and by the way, the Mideast, outside Israel and Turkey, basically consists of vulnerable autocracies and pathological predators, and so you don't really have democratic expression that you can look at outside a very few places, like Bahrain, for example, where things are quite calm.

The Arab street has calmed down massively, almost totally, since the American bombing and the effective conquest of almost all of Afghanistan by the Northern Alliance and the friendly Pashtuns.

The reason for that is, as a Mideast expert friend of mine said to me -- I won't use his name, because he said it privately, although he says things like this publicly a lot -- he said shortly after the September 11 event, he said, "We're going to deal with this in one of two ways, and if at the end of the time we've dealt with it, we're either going to be held in contempt in the Mideast, as we are now" -- and he meant as we were then in late September -- "or we will both be feared and respected. And the important thing," he said, "in that part of the world, there's nothing in between. There's no intermediate case of being, kind of, generally liked for being nice guys and, sort of, moderate. That option isn't there."

Now, it might have been there at one time. It's not there now, because of the history of the last decade to decade and a half. Either held in contempt or feared and respected.

What's happened over the course of the last couple of weeks is that we are beginning to be feared and respected. So what this all hinges on, I think, with respect to Iraq is can we handle this in such a way as to be successful? And I think the people who are pessimistic -- and I would note that the New York Times editorialized before we started bombing -- or perhaps right after the bombing started at a very low level, but any case, around early October, to say that this war was going to really be difficult and under no circumstances was going to be as easy as the Gulf War was.

WOOLSEY: Well, one of the things that got forgotten was this many-order-of-magnitude shift in smart weapons and what they can do against forces in the open that are not protected by air.

The Soviets did not own the air over Afghanistan, because we took it away from them by giving Stingers to the mujahedeen. The Soviets did not own the night, because they didn't have night vision equipment that was worth a damn because American export controls had kept it from going outside the country. They didn't have infrared sensors that could pick up a breath coming out of a cave at several kilometers.

And so there are a number of military advantages through technology that we've got that were just ideas, really, at the time of the Gulf War that have made a huge difference in Afghanistan, and would make, I think, a very substantial difference in any kind of air campaign against Iraq.

This is the desert. This is not Vietnam. This is very open country. In order to fight even against lightly armed rebels in the north and south, Saddam has to concentrate forces, armored divisions. And concentrated

forces in the desert, day or night, are sitting ducks to the type of ordnance and the type of air power we can bring to bear.

I think the main question is, "Would we have enough air bases?" not, "Do we need areas like we had in Saudi Arabia in 1990, '91 to deploy hundreds of thousands of troops?" I think the modus operandi could be something similar to what we've seen in Afghanistan.

I believe we need Turkey. We need Turkey, both because it's a Muslim state, it's a NATO ally, it adjoins Iraq, it is the route in to the only free part of Iraq, the north, where the INC and the Kurds operate; and it has air bases, which we're now using. We need some land-based tactical aircraft. We can operate sea-based tactical aircraft from the Persian Gulf and we can operate bombers from Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. I think if we have Turkey, we can also have a place to stage special forces from and the like.

So, my view is that we don't need a full coalition. We don't need a full coalition for the military forces. And we don't really even need them for the geography. There will be lots of people if we move against Iraq that will tut-tut. They will act like the townspeople in the old movie "High Noon." When Gary Cooper tries to get them to help go against the bad guys who are coming in at high noon, everybody's got a reason.

WOOLSEY: They hold meetings. They pass resolutions. They do all kinds of things. They just don't sign up to fight, except his Quaker pacifist wife, Grace Kelly, who shoots one bad guy in the back. Terrific.

(LAUGHTER)

We need one good ally. And I think that needs to be Turkey. But I think with Turkey this job could be done.

I'll take the congressman first and then we'll come back.

HOLT: I have a -- I'm Rush Holt representing New Jersey.

I have a question about Nunn-Lugar and the loose germs counterpart of the loose nukes program. And you know, I can understand, I think, why over 10 years -- roughly 10 years now the programs have not gotten the attention that so many experts have said they deserve, nor the funding. And it may sound odd that I'm asking you a question about why Congress hasn't responded appropriately; perhaps we should be answering that question. But really, what I -- I find it almost inconceivable that now since September 11 we've passed out various legislation, energy and water appropriations and others, that suggest that we think the technology and materials in former Soviet weapons labs is less of a concern than it was a year ago and -- or years before that.

So the question I have is, in your conversations with people in the intelligence community or, kind of, opinion makers around Washington, is there somebody out there -- is there some school of thought that is suggesting that we should be paying less attention to these things? Who is giving the authors of these appropriations -- of this appropriations legislation the idea that we should be funding Nunn-Lugar and the loose germs programs at less rather than more following September 11? Where are these ideas coming from?

WOOLSEY: I share your concern and your puzzlement. I can only offer some hypotheses, because this isn't something I work on or spend time on.

With respect to Nunn-Lugar, one part of the problem, at least in the executive branch, may be the unobligated balances. Because -- and that probably is not the fault of those on this side of the Atlantic who are trying to implement the program, but rather the recipients for not going along with steps that need to be taken.

WOOLSEY: So we have to bring this to a very high level with the Russians and get presidential directives going down over there for them to get busy, and for us to go ahead and obligate what we've got. And then we can get more money coming into the pipeline from Congress. I think that's part of the problem.

I think another part of it may be that President Putin, by cracking down on the media and by exerting rather strong leadership and having some successes in the Duma, including with such absolutely revolutionary things in Russia as private ownership of land, at least in cities -- not agricultural land yet. But he has proven to be what the West regards, I think, a strong president, and since September 11, one that has been very much positive in terms of his dealings with the United States and the war against terrorism.

And I think somewhere in back of people's minds may be he's got this all under control. But he's got a lot more control over the Russia media than he does over Russian organized crime that may able, for a few million bucks, to get hold of some plutonium and sell it for a lot more to the Al Qaeda or someone else.

So I think it's probably those two things if I had to guess. I say a lot of people, kind of, have the impression that Putin has things in hand in Russia, and we've been talking about things like Nunn-Lugar for a long time, so it's probably largely done. And then on the budgeteer side of things, the fact that there are substantial and obligated balances probably deters some people from moving money in. That's the only two things I could think of.

SHAYS: It's a puzzle.

WOOLSEY: Yes.

SHAYS: Jim said he'd stay a little later so you will get a few questions.

HOEFFEL: I'm Joe Hoeffel from Pennsylvania. I wanted to ask the director a proliferation question. I think we're all pleased that arms control has, sort of, come back to both the presidential agenda and the national agenda, even if it's two unilateral things working rather than a negotiation working between Russia and the United States.

As part of that, how critical is the potential proliferation into space of weapons? And how should we be dealing that? How should Congress be addressing that? Should that also be viewed as unilateral prohibitions that we might declare, or is that the subject of negotiations? How big a problem?

WOOLSEY: Well, I think two things. First of all, I do think we should move to ballistic missile defenses. I wrote a piece the summer before last in the National Review about why I thought we probably should do this in space, with not directed energy, but rather simple versions of the old Brilliant Pebbles program, satellites so simple that their inventor called them burros, because they only do one thing but they do it quite reliably and well.

WOOLSEY: But I was driven on that -- to that point by the fact that one cannot do the job of boost-phase intercept -- which I think is the way to go with ballistic missile defense -- against Iran other than by basing in Russia or in space. And in the summer of 2000, I thought either of those was -- I thought basing in Russia was unlikely. And therefore, in order to have full coverage of the rogue states, we had to move into space.

And the deployment I proposed was one in which the orbits were inclined in such a way they did not cross Russia. And therefore, Russia wouldn't have any feeling that its deterrent was being endangered. That was a year and a half ago.

Today a lot has changed. First of all, what's changed is Iran is even closer to perhaps going through some kind of transition than it was a year and a half ago. And secondly, Russia is a lot friendlier.

And so what I would say today is that, as part of our working together with Russia on lowering the levels of offenses, I would talk with them about proceeding to deploy surface-based -- whether on ships or on land, one can work this out -- but surface-based boost-phase intercept to deal particularly with North Korea and Iraq, and those can be done from the sea. And as long as Iran is in the hands of the mullahs, to move forward with perhaps a surface-based boost-phase intercept facility in Russia just north of Iran.

I think we may be able to do a very important share -- and the most important share, really, of ballistic missile defense cooperatively with the Russians, agreeing on what the rogue states are. And then also, of course, have missile defense in a localized and theater capability that would defend our deployed forces wherever they might go.

So I'm not sure anymore -- even though I thought it a year and a half ago, I'm not sure anymore that in the short run we really need to move into space as a way to do missile defense. But I do think that the proliferation of ballistic missiles and of weapons of mass destruction is leading us to a point where we really do need to do missile defense. But I think we can do it far more cooperatively with the Russians than I thought when I wrote that article a year and a half ago.

SHAYS: Let me tell you how I would like to do this. Jim did want to leave at 5, and can stay a little later. I'd like you to come and ask a question up at the mike. Don't be intimidated by doing that, but who would like to start? You want to come on up and ask a question?

SHAYS: And just identify who you are.

QUESTION: This is the Turkish News Agency. You mentioned that what the U.S. needs is Turkey in case of any possible attacks on Iraq. But we know that there might be some reactions from Turkish government, because Turkey suffered a lot in past...

WOOLSEY: Yes.

QUESTION: ... because of the results of the Iraqi Gulf War in the past. So what do you think the ways will be to persuade Turkey to support the U.S. in case of any attacks? And do you think the U.S. should give anything to Turkey in sense of economics?

WOOLSEY: Yes, I think it's an excellent question. And I think there are two things that are really crucial. One is Turkey's concerns probably center heavily on Iraq splitting up a Kurdistan existing in the north of Iraq, and that Kurdistan acting as a draw to Turkey's Kurds in the southeast portion of Turkey, and therefore, instability for Turkey. And after all Turkey has had terrorists operating in -- PKK and so forth, operating in the Kurdish community. And it's been a concern of theirs for some time.

Secondly, as a result of the Gulf War, Turkey has had expenses and uncertainty associated with trade and particularly access to oil. I would try to work some type of an arrangement between the Turkish government and the Iraqi opposition -- which I think, although not a perfect organization, speaks generally for the main Sunni and Shi'a and Kurdish opposition groups to Saddam.

I would try to work some arrangement between the Iraqi opposition and Turkey to ensure that all parties were agreed that the borders of Iraq would be maintained the way they are now, but secondly that Turkey be given some sort of special access or concessions with respect to the oil fields of the north. After all, Turkey, at one point in its history, back in I believe the 1920s, had an opportunity to -- at least between the wars, had an opportunity to hold an important share of northern Iraq and gave it up.

WOOLSEY: And that would have meant Turkey was -- would have been an oil -- not only had oil, but probably been an oil exporting state. So I think there ought to be some way that, in recognition of its

strategic location, its Kurdish minority and what it suffered in the past, Turkey ought to be given some, kind of, special access and guaranteed access to the oil of Iraq's north.

Those are the only two things I can think of.

Certainly, this is a very wealthy country. And we are, in part, doing some things in Afghanistan and Pakistan in order to ease the impact of war on the populations of those countries. And my goodness, if we can do it in Pakistan and Afghanistan, we ought to be able to take some substantial economic steps to help our long-time NATO ally and I would say very close friend, Turkey.

So on all three of those points I think there are things we can do.

SHAYS: Any of the staff that would like to ask a question. Do you have a question?

(UNKNOWN): I'm not staff.

SHAYS: OK. First, let me just see if staff and then we can go. Are you staff? No. OK. Why don't we just have you -- staff had a chance -- are you staff? OK. Why don't you come on up?

WALKER (ph): I'll identify. My name is Paul Walker. I used to work on House Armed Services here. So I guess I'm former staff. Or I'm an alumnus, as they say.

I work for Mikhail Gorbachev's international environmental group called Global Green USA here in the United States. It's called Green Cross around the world. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. We work on the cooperative threat reduction program quite a bit. We help facilitate the safe and environmentally sound destruction of weapons of mass destruction around the world, to great extent in Russia.

One of our main concerns is that just north of Kazakhstan lies the easternmost stockpile of Russian chemical weapons. And it's a stockpile called Shuchie in the Kurganskaya Oblast of 5,400 tons of nerve-agent, which is relatively insecure. And I've actually personally done an on-site official inspection at that site.

The problem we've had is that the House Armed Services Committee here over the last two years, FY 2000 and 2001, has zeroed out the funding within the cooperative threat reduction program -- and maybe Congressman Holt is aware of this -- for that program. And as stated in language that that program is more -- that stockpile is more an environmental concern for Russia than a security concern for ourselves and the Russians and the world.

SHAYS: What was your question?

WALKER (ph): My question is, should we move forward and support destruction of this stockpile?

WOOLSEY: I'll be a straight man. Absolutely. Although as a former general counsel of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I very much hesitate to give advice to House committees.

I would say that there are a number of problems -- very terrible environmental problems in Russia, including the nuclear submarine, the Kursk, up in north in the Kola Peninsula and otherwise. And this -- I've heard about this one. This is one of the worst.

And partially in light of this developing relationship with Russia, we have an opportunity here -- President Putin is far from perfect. And we are not close buddies yet as countries. But we have an opportunity here, if we respond properly, to take up this hand he has offered in the -- immediately after September 11 and move forward on a number of cooperative fronts with Russia, and move Russia more or less solidly for the first time in that poor country's existence into the world of being essentially a democratic Western-oriented state.

WOOLSEY: And in addition to all of the other things we're doing -- fighting terrorism and so forth -- that has got to be one of our top national priorities. And it seems to me this is an important part of it.

SHAYS: Can you stay another 15?

WOOLSEY: Sure, I can stay until 15 after. So...

SHAYS: OK, so I'm going to be pretty strict on that.

Sir, you can come next. Come on up.

We have about seven minutes left. Excuse me, we have about six.

QUESTION: There are a couple of events in this succession of wars and terrorist things that you mentioned that's contributing to discontent you left out. And I'm curious as to how you think -- one is the hostage crisis in Iran...

WOOLSEY: In '79, yes.

QUESTION: And did you just draw the line...

WOOLSEY: No, no.

QUESTION: And the other -- let me just get the other one off, that's the war in Yugoslavia. Did that not get anybody's attention? Let me ask a yes or no question on top of all of them.

WOOLSEY: OK.

QUESTION: Is there any evidence of any example of how we react -- our reaction to the Marine barracks bombing in Beirut cause discontent or is it folks like you who know about it figure it stands to reason?

WOOLSEY: I don't know of any precise statement or report from a meeting or anything like that that suggests that the Beirut -- the retreat after the Beirut bombing -- you know, standing alone was something that attention was called to. It's the pattern that I think is important. And I must people who I know who know a lot more about the Mideast than I do, people like Bernard Lewis (ph) and so forth -- it's the pattern that really matters.

Now I didn't mention the '79 hostage crisis, although I do think that is probably part of the puzzle because we were, in effect, humiliated by a new Islamic extremist state. And the United States tried to respond decisively, but the raid in the desert was a complete disaster. And we looked like a pitiful, helpless giant.

So I think I would say that that -- yes, if one pushes it back from the -- into the beginning of the '80s, and should, the hostage crisis and the Desert One ought to be part of the pattern that I described.

WOOLSEY: And then -- but as far as the Balkans are concerned and the war in the former Yugoslavia, what I would say about that is that we were too slow, I think, to tune on to Milosevic's cruelty and ethnic cleansing. And I think we could have stopped him sooner than we did. But at least we did stop him in both Bosnia and in Kosovo. We came to the aid of Muslims in both cases. And we got him out.

Now, it wasn't quick and it wasn't neat. And it was a bit clumsy and ugly, but we got the job done.

So I don't see former Yugoslavia and the sequence of events there as something that redounds ultimately to our discredit or sense of weakness.

MARKEY: Jim, let me ask you this question, Jim. I suspect that if Osama had access to nuclear weapons, that he would have already used them. What is your feeling about the likelihood that he has access to them, given the fact that they haven't been introduced yet into this conflict?

SHAYS: And then we'll have one more question. The gentleman in the back of the room will close it out.

WOOLSEY: It think it's unlikely he has nuclear weapons, something that could detonate with fissionable material and leave a mushroom cloud and so forth.

I think it would have to be a far more open question whether he has some nuclear material that could be used in a dirty bomb of some sort and spread radiological material around and be very damaging.

I think the chance that he has -- he or those who are working with him have some type of access to biological or some type of radiological material is considerably greater than the chance that they have access to a combination of fissionable material, a place to work, detonators, engineering and so forth that are necessary to actually assemble a nuclear weapon itself.

SHAYS: Sir, you're going to have the last question there. Thank you.

QUESTION: I'm Greg Seagul (ph) with Global Security News Wire, which is part of the National Journal Group.

Two pronged question, if I may. First, seeing how the recent anthrax outbreaks have indicated that terrorists may or may not have chemical or biological weapons, what do you think the possibilities are that states such as Iran, Iraq and so forth are helping terrorist groups -- and not just Al Qaeda, but Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the plethora of other terrorist groups? What do you think the possibilities are that they are being aided in acquiring chemical and biological weapons?

QUESTION: And the second part of the question would be what do you think these states are doing concerning developing genetically modified -- that would be used particularly on military targets that are already vaccinated?

WOOLSEY: Yes. The second question first. This is a very substantial concern if one is dealing with a state such as Iraq, either operating using biological weapons on -- let's say in some last gasp launch of Scuds against Israel or whatever -- or more likely provided to a terrorist group. Because if -- it's most unlikely that Al Qaeda is genetically modifying smallpox or anything else to be resistant to vaccines or antibiotics, but the possibility that Iraq might have done so is rather substantial.

And one of the reasons people have been very concerned about biological warfare agents coming out of Iraq is that Saddam guarded the biological warfare agents during the inspections more vigorously than he guarded anything. And one of the reasons would be to make sure that you can't track strains. For example, if he has the Ames strain that has been used in those letters in the United States that would be -- and people don't know that he has it, that would be one thing to guard.

Another thing to guard would be that strain of some biological agent that's been genetically modified in order to be able to resist vaccines or antibiotics. So that all really hinges on the state assistance.

I think it's unlikely that a state other than Iraq, as a matter of national policy, has provided or is providing chemical or bacteriological agents to any major terrorist group.



One can't discount the possibility that somewhere in Syria or Sudan there is something going on between some group or other. But as a matter of national policy, the only country in the world that really strongly supported -- other than the Taliban -- that strongly supported the strike on September 11 was Iraq. The only country that has a major industrial capacity for sophisticated chemical weapons, such as sarin or biological weapons, and we know has weaponized them and we know is extraordinarily hostile to the United States, is Iraq.

So this all to me comes back to the issue of what you think about the likelihood of Iraqi support and involvement with Al Qaeda and some of its associated organizations. I mean, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, for all practical purposes now, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Al Qaeda.

SHAYS: Thank you.

MARKEY: A warm round of applause.

(APPLAUSE)

Just so you know, Chris Shays and I and the Bipartisan Task Force on Nonproliferation have a series of equally important briefings in the next several weeks. We're going to invite all of you to them.

I think that a great service was provided by Jim Woolsey today.

We thank you all for coming.

(APPLAUSE)

END